

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION ARA-14

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S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 KINGSTON 5467

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, JM
SUBJECT: THE 39TH PNP PARTY CONFERENCE

1. SUMMARY: AS HAD BEEN EXPECTED, THE PEOPLE'S NATIONAL PARTY (PNP) CONFERENCE TURNED INTO A SHOWDOWN BATTLE BETWEEN PARTY RADICALS AND MODERATES. UNEXPECTEDLY THE BATTLE CAME CLOSE TO PHYSICAL VIOLENCE AND ONLY BY ADROIT POLITICAL MANEUVERING WAS PRIME MINISTER MANLEY ABLE TO HOLD THE CONFERENCE TOGETHER. AS THE TENSION HAS EASED THIS WEEK IT APPEARS THAT THE RADICAL ELEMENT WITHIN THE PNP HAS SUSTAINED A SERIOUS SETBACK AND THAT THE PRIME MINISTER HAS BEEN FORCED TO REASSERT HIS PERSONAL CONTROL OVER THE PARTY IN ORDER TO KEEP IT FROM CONSUMING ITSELF IN INTERNAL STRIFE. END SUMMARY

2. ON THE BASIS OF CONVERSATIONS WITH A NUMBER OF SOURCES WITHIN THE CABINET, THE PRESS, AND BOTH RADICALS AND MODERATES WITHIN THE PNP, THE EMBASSY HAS PIECED TOGETHER THE FOLLOWING SEQUENCE OF EVENTS AT THE RECENTLY CONCLUDED (SEPT 8-11) 39 TH ANNUAL PEOPLE'S NATIONAL PARTY CONFERENCE IN KINGSTON. IN SOME CASES THE INFORMATION COMES FROM SENSITIVE SOURCES CLOSE TO THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE KNOWLEDGE OF SOME EVENTS AS REPORTED HERE MUST BE PROTECTED.

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3. BEHIND THE SCENES PREPARATIONS FOR THE PARTY CONFERENCE WERE INTENSE (SEE KINGSTON 4818 AND 5008) FEATURING ACTIVE CAMPAIGNS IN ALL CONSTITUENCIES BY BOTH RADICALS AND MODERATES TO WIN DELEGATE SEATS TO THE CONFERENCE. INTEREST CENTERED ON THE CAMPAIGN FOR THE FOUR PARTY VICE-PRESIDENCIES. THE CANDIDATES

WERE: FOREIGN MINISTER P.J. PATTERSON, MINISTER FOR PUBLIC SERVICE HOWARD COOKE AND MINISTER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT RALPH BROWN, AS THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE MODERATES; MINISTER OF STATE FOR WOMEN'S AFFAIRS CARMEN MCGREGOR AS A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT (MCGREGOR, WHO HAS NORMALLY BEEN ASSOCIATED WITH MORE RADICAL CAUSES, WAS PUT FORWARD WITH STRONG MODERATE SUPPORT, AND WITH THE PERSONAL IMPRIMATUR OF MRS. BEVERLEY MANLEY, THE PRESIDENT OF THE PNP WOMEN'S MOVEMENT.) (SEE KINGSTON 4818); AND MINISTER OF HOUSING ANTHONY SPAULDING AND MINISTER OF STATE FOR LAND REFORM DESMOND LEAKEY, REPRESENTING THE RADICALS. OF THE CANDIDATES, SPAULDING, PATTERSON AND COOKE WERE RUNNING FOR RE-ELECTION. (ACCORDING TO ONE SOURCE CLOSE TO US, PATTERSON IS PLAYING A SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN MOVING THE PNP TOWARD A MORE MODERATE POSITION.)

4. THE FIRST DAY OF THE CONFERENCE FEATURED A HARD-HITTING ECONOMIC ANALYSIS BY RICHARD FLETCHER, MINISTER OF STATE FOR PLANS AND PROJECTS. FLETCHER SPOKE ON BEHALF OF THE PRIME MINISTER, WHO WAS ILL. HE STRESSED THE NEED FOR CONTINUED AUSTERITY FOR AT LEAST THE NEXT THREE YEARS. HE PREDICTED CONTINUED IF SPORADIC SHORTAGES AND SAID THAT THE COUNTRY WOULD HAVE TO LEARN TO LIVE WITHOUT LUXURIES SUCH AS COOKING OIL. HE PREDICTED THAT AFTER THREE YEARS (I.E. BEFORE THE NEXT ELECTIONS),
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THE SITUATION WOULD BEGIN TO SHOW SIGNIFICANT SIGNS OF IMPROVEMENT. ACCORDING TO ONE DELEGATE PRESENT, THE FLETCHER PRESENTATION WAS RECEIVED WITH GRUDGING ACCEPTANCE. FLETCHER WAS FOLLOWED ON THE FIRST DAY BY LOUIS LINDSEY, A RADICAL ECONOMIST FROM THE MINISTRY OF NATIONAL MOBILIZATION, WHOSE PRESENTATION SOUGHT TO HIGHLIGHT THE IMPACT OF SOCIALISM IN EACH CONSTITUENCY. LINDSEY'S PRESENTATION STIRRED A DEBATE ON WHETHER THE GOVERNMENT WAS DOING ENOUGH FOR THE MYRIAD OF PNP CONSTITUENCIES THROUGH THE COUNTRY. THE SPEECH WAS POORLY RECEIVED.

5. THE PRINCIPAL PORTION OF THE SECOND DAY OF THE CONFERENCE WAS DEVOTED TO AN EVENING SESSION WHICH FEATURED PRESENTATIONS BY EACH OF THE PNP AUXILIARY GROUPS, INCLUDING THE PNP YOUTH ORGANIZATION AND THE PNP WOMEN'S GROUP. (THE TWO GROUPS HAVE LONG BEEN RIVALS FOR INFLUENCE WITHIN THE PNP. THE WOMEN'S GROUP WAS FORMED IN THE FACE OF STRONG OPPOSITION FROM THE MILITANTLY RADICAL YOUTH ORGANIZATION) THE YOUTH ORGANIZATION TABLED ITS POSITION PAPER (KINGSTON 4646), WHICH TAKES A MILITANT STAND IN FAVOR

OF "SCIENTIFIC SOCIALISM", TOTAL CONTROL OF THE PRESS,
A ONE-PARTY STATE, ETC. THE PAPER, WHICH HAS BECOME
THE IDEOLOGICAL MANIFESTO OF THE RADICAL LEFT, WAS
PUBLISHED SEVERAL WEEKS EARLIER AND THEREFORE CREATED
NO SURPRISES. THE PRESIDENT OF THE WOMEN'S ORGANI-
ZATION, MRS. MANLEY, THEN TOOK THE STAND AND DELIVERED
A RINGING CALL FOR WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND FOR AN INCREASED
ROLE FOR WOMEN IN THE PARTY. THE SPEECH, WHICH UNDER
PARTY TRADITION SHOULD NOT HAVE SUPPORTED ANY OF THE
VICE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES, WAS WIDELY INTERPRETED
AS BEING A CAMPAIGN SPEECH FOR MRS. MCGREGOR. THE
YOUTH ORGANIZATION REPRESENTATIVE OBJECTED TO THIS
AND SOME MEMBERS BOOED MRS. MANLEY AND STAGED A WALK-
OUT. PRIME MINISTER MANLEY, WHO WAS PRESENT, TOOK THE
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STAND WHEN MRS. MANLEY WAS FINISHED AND ISSUED A CALL
FOR PARTY DISCIPLINE. OBVIOUSLY ANGERED BY THE TREAT-
MENT OF HIS WIFE, HE ADJOURNED THE EVENING SESSION.

6. LATER THAT EVENING, TONY SPAULDING AND DESMOND
LEAKEY, WHOSE SUPPORTERS HAD BEEN CANVASSING DELEGATES
DURING THE DAY, REPORTEDLY CAUCUSED AND DETERMINED THAT
THE ELECTION FOR THE VICE PRESIDENCIES WOULD GO
BADLY FOR THE RADICALS. THE CANVASS SHOWED THAT
SPAULDING WOULD WIN ONE OF THE SEATS, BUT BY ONLY A
SLIM MARGIN, AND THAT LEAKEY WOULD LOSE BADLY. ACCORDING
TO A USUALLY WELL-INFORMED SOURCE, SPAULDING AND LEAKEY
DECIDED TO WITHDRAW FROM THE VICE PRESIDENTIAL RACE
WITH THE STATED REASON THAT THEY WERE OBJECTING TO MRS.
MANLEY'S SPEECH. IT WAS PLANNED THAT THE DECISION

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WOULD BE ANNOUNCED AS THE ELECTIONS WERE BEGUN ON
SEPTEMBER 10.

7. ON SEPTEMBER 10, PRIME MINISTER MANLEY, WHO HAD
ALSO CAUCUSED WITH ADVISORS AFTER THE PREVIOUS EVENING'S
EVENTS, OPENED THE SESSION WITH AN UNEXPECTEDLY STRONG
REBUKE OF "THOSE WHO BOOED THE PREVIOUS EVENING."
MANLEY DEMANDED AN APOLOGY AND STRESSED THE NEED FOR
PARTY DISCIPLINE. HE DID NOT RECEIVE THE APOLOGY. AS
MANLEY LEFT THE STAND, SPAULDING TOOK ADVANTAGE OF THE
SITUATION TO TAKE THE MICROPHONE AND ANNOUNCE THAT HE
AND DESMOND LEAKEY COULD NOT RUN IN THE VICE PRESI-
DENTIAL RACE BECAUSE OF THE PERSONAL INTERVENTIONS OF
THE PRIME MINISTER. SPAULDING REPORTEDLY SAID " IF
THE LEADER ALREADY GIVES HIS SUPPORT TO OTHERS WE SHOULD
NOT RUN." THEREUPON HE AND LEAKEY LEFT THE CONFERENCE
ROOM FOLLOWED BY THE PNP YOUTH ORGANIZATION AND OTHER
RADICALS. ALTOGETHER, ABOUT 10 PERCENT OF THOSE PRESENT
LEFT THE CONFERENCE ROOM.

8. THE SPAULDING ANNOUNCEMENT THREW THE PNP CONFERENCE
INTO TURMOIL. AS MANLEY CAUCUSED ON THE FLOOR, THE
PRESIDING ELECTION OFFICER, MINISTER FOR NATIONAL SECURITY
KEBLE MUNN, DECLARED THAT THE FOUR REMAINING CANDIDATES
IN THE ELECTION HAD WON, AND EACH CANDIDATE IN TURN
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MADE AN ACCEPTANCE SPEECH. MEANWHILE, OUTSIDE, THE
RAIDCALS WERE CONDUCTING A " LOUD" MEETING WITH
MUCH SHOUTING AND ARGUMENTS. SOME IN THE GROUP WERE
ADVOCATING A RETURN TO THE HALL TO " FIGHT IT OUT WITH
STONES AND BOTTLES" IF NECESSARY. INSIDE THE CONFERENCE
ROOM, THE GROUP OUTSIDE COULD BE PLAINLY HEARD. PRIME
MINISTER MANLEY FINALLY TOOK THE STAND AND ORDERED
THE SESSION TO BREAK DOWN INTO A NUMBER OF COMMITTEE
MEETINGS, INCLUDING A MEETING OF THE PNP PARTY EXECUTIVE.
MANLEY MET VARIOUSLY WITH EXECUTIVE AND REPRESENTATIVES
OF THE YOUTH ORGANIZATION AND THE WOMEN'S GROUP. AT
THE PNP EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING MANLEY PROPOSED THAT
THE FOUR ELECTED CANDIDATES AGREE TO GIVE UP THEIR SEATS
AND TO STAND FOR ELECTION AGAIN AT A LATER TIME. THE
MODERATES WERE INCENSED, FEELING THEY HAD WON A MAJOR
VICTORY AND THAT IT WAS NOW BEING TAKEN AWAY. MANLEY
PREVAILED, HOWEVER, DESPITE THE CONTINUED OPPOSITION OF A
NUMBER OF MODERATE MEMBERS OF THE PNP EXECUTIVE. MANLEY

THEN SPOKE WITH YOUTH LEADERS (OTHERS WERE IN ATTENDANCE) AND IN THE WORDS OF ONE DELEGATE PRESENT "ATE CROW" ADMITTING THAT THE WOMEN'S CANDIDATE MAY HAVE RECEIVED AN UNFAIR ADVANTAGE, AND RETRACTING HIS DEMAND FOR AN APOLOGY FROM THE YOUTH ORGANIZATION. HE ANNOUNCED THAT THE ELECTION RESULTS HAD BEEN INVALIDATED AND THAT A NEW ELECTION WOULD BE SCHEDULED FOR JANUARY. THE MODERATES WERE DEJECTED, MANY PRESENT WERE IN TEARS, AND SOME WERE ONLY DISSUADED WITH CONSIDERABLE EFFORT FROM BOYCOTTING THE SUNDAY CONCLUDING MEETING OF THE PNP CONFERENCE. THE RADICALS FELT THEY HAD WON A THOROUGH VINDICATION.

9. ON SUNDAY, THE PRIME MINISTER WAS INTRODUCED BY PORTIA SIMPSON, A PNP MEMBER OF THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT.

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IN A SHORT (FOR MANLEY) ADDRESS, HE SAID HE HAD DECIDED THAT THE PROBLEM OF DISCIPLINE IN THE PARTY CALLED FOR HIS PERSONAL ATTENTION. HE ANNOUNCED THAT EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY, HE WOULD BE TURNING OVER GREATER GOVERNMENT RESPONSIBILITY TO HIS MINISTERS AND THAT HE WOULD ASSUME PERSONAL CONTROL OF THE PARTY. THE ANNOUNCEMENT WAS MET WITH CONSIDERABLE ENTHUSIASM FROM BOTH RADICALS AND MODERATES (REFLECTING SOME CONFUSION AS TO MANLEY'S INTENTIONS). MANLEY ALSO ANNOUNCED THAT HE WAS ASSUMING PERSONAL CONTROL OVER THE LAND REFORM PROGRAM, AN ISSUE WHICH HAS BEEN CLOSELY IDENTIFIED WITH THE RADICAL LEFT. IN PARTING, MANLEY MADE A DISTINCTION BETWEEN THOSE WHO SUPPORT THE PARTY AND THOSE WHO ONLY USE THE PARTY IN THEIR QUEST FOR THEIR OWN FORM OF SOCIALISM. "THE MOVEMENT IS THE PNP", HE EMPHASIZED. "SOCIALISM IS (ONLY) THE OBJECTIVE." THE MEMBERS OF THE PARTY "MUST SUPPORT THE MOVEMENT." THE SPEECH WAS SEEN BY MOST AS A SHARP ATTACK ON THE RADICAL LEFT (I.E. THOSE WHO SUPPORT THEIR OWN FORM OF SOCIALISM TO THE DISADVANTAGE OF THE PARTY).

10. BY TAKING OVER GREATER CONTROL OF THE PARTY, MANLEY HAS, IN EFFECT, ASSUMED GREATER CONTROL OVER D.K. DUNCAN, PARTY GENERAL SECRETARY AND A RADICAL LEADER. BY TAKING OVER THE LAND REFORM PROGRAM, MANLEY WILL BE PRE-EMPTING THE RADICALS FROM USING AN ISSUE WHICH THEY HAVE EXPLOITED WELL IN RECENT MONTHS IN THEIR INTERNAL BATTLE WITH PARTY MODERATES. ON THE EVENING OF SEPT 10, D K DUNCAN, ATTENDING A RECEPTION IN HONOR OF CERTAIN VISITING FOREIGN DELEGATES TO THE CONFERENCE FROM SOCIALIST COUNTRIES, DELIVERED AN EXTEMPORANEOUS CONDEMNATION OF THE "FAMILY CULT" SURROUNDING MANLEY. IN STRONG, AND REPORTEDLY VICIOUS TERMS, HE CONDEMNED THOSE WHO WERE

"OUT TO GET HIM AND HIS FRIENDS." THE SCENE PROVOKED
A STRONG REACTION FROM SOME PRESENT AND WAS SO EM-
BARRASSING TO THE REMAINING GUESTS THAT SOME (IN-
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CLUDING THE CUBAN AMBASSADOR) LEFT HURRIEDLY. AS OF
SEPT 14 THERE IS CONSIDERABLE SPECULATION IN PARTY
CIRCLES THAT DUNCAN MAY RESIGN HIS PARTY AND CABINET
POSTS. THE DEPUTY SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE PNP, A
RADICA, HAS ALREADY SUBMITTED HIS RESIGNATION AS HAVE A
NUMBER OF OTHER MINOR RADICAL MEMBERS.

11. NOTWITHSTANDING THE STRONG REACTION OF THE RADICALS,
THERE IS STILL CONSIDERABLE CONFUSION OVER MANLEY'S
INTENTIONS AT THE PARTY CONFERENCE. SOME JAMAICAN ANA-
LYSTS FEEL THAT MANLEY FIRMLY BELIEVES THAT THE PNP
WILL ULTIMATELY HAVE TO RESORT TO THE PRESCRIPTIONS OF
THE RADICALS AND THAT THIS IS WHY HE STEPPED IN TO SAVE THE RADICALS
FROM DEFEAT IN THE VICE
PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS.

OTHER ANALYSTS FEEL THAT MANLEY HAD TO STEP INTO KEEP
THE RADICALS FROM GOING UNDERGROUND. SOME OF THE RADICALS
CAME AWAY FEELING THAT MANLEY'S DECISION TO REACTIVATE HIS
OWN ROLE IN THE PARTY WILL SERVE TO REDEDICATE THE PARTY
TO "TRUE SOCIALIST OBJECTIVES" AS THEY DEFINE THEM. ALL
SEEM TO AGREE THAT MANLEY HAS, IN THE FACE OF A DIVIDED
PARTY, INCREASED THE PERSONALIZATION OF HIS ADMINISTRATION.
MORE THAN ONE OBSERVER HAS NOTED HOW VULNERABLE THE
ENTIRE POWER STRUCTURE IS WHEN IT DEPENDS SOLELY
ON THE EXISTENCE OF ONE MAN. CLEARLY IT IS NOW
MANLEY'S MOVE AND IF HE CHOOSES, HE CAN REINTEGRATE HIS
LEFT, OR PORTIONS OF IT WITHIN THE PARTY. FOR THE
TIME BEING, HOWEVER, IT APPEARS THE READICALS IN THE
PNP HAVE MOVED PRECARIOUSLY CLOSE TO TOTAL ECLIPSE.

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